



2008 Annual Awards Program

Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

Deadline for Nominations: March 14, 2008

Complete this form and attach to your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (select only one)

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: Green Business Partnership

Jurisdiction where program originated: Sarasota County, Florida

Jurisdiction population: County 387,461 (unincorporated 250,858)

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2007 to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: October Year: 2006

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Richmond, Virginia, September 2008. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: James Hey

Title: County Administrator Jurisdiction: Sarasota County

Name: _____

Title: _____ Jurisdiction: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____ Jurisdiction: _____

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of person who should be contacted with questions regarding the nomination: Thomas Franklin

Title of nominator: Recycling Program Coordinator Jurisdiction of nominator: Sarasota County

Street address: 2817 Cattlemen Road

City: Sarasota State/Province: FL

Zip/Postal code: 34232 Country: _____

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**International City County Management
Association
2008 ICMA Annual Awards Program**

*Nomination for ICMA Program Excellence Award:
Community Partnership Award
March 14, 2008*

**Green Business Partnership
Raising the Environmental Bar Together**



In association with Sarasota County

www.scgov.net/greenbusiness

**James Ley
County Administrator
Sarasota County, FL
941-861-5111**

**Thomas Franklin
Recycling Program Coordinator
Sarasota County, FL
941-861-6218**

Community Goal: Increase Commercial Recycling

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) has two programs in place to recognize businesses that enhance their environmental stewardship. Unfortunately, these programs are limited to marinas and hotels. Sarasota County wanted to expand recycling for all county businesses, increasing the commercial recycling rate beyond the levels reached by the county's 1991 mandatory recycling ordinance.

In 2004, Sarasota County applied for and was awarded a two-year FDEP Innovative Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant. The initial goal was to incentivize commercial recycling, but as we developed the Green Business Partnership (GBP) program, we recognized that it could easily be expanded to address other areas of environmental concern. The resulting program not only addresses commercial recycling, but recognizes businesses that demonstrate verifiable holistic environmental stewardship. Consequently, our community partners have actively implemented proven solid waste management, water conservation and energy conservation practices.

Challenges and Business Operations

Improving the environmental performance of businesses has been an established goal for many communities across the United States. The challenge has been balancing responsible business enterprise and regulatory control. Rules and regulations often hinder cooperative relationships between businesses and government, so we began looking for incentives that local government could offer businesses to improve their environmental performance. Monetary rewards for positive behavior was not feasible, since we were seeking citizenship responsibility, not financial rebates to our customers.



The GBP faced another challenge—the cost to develop, implement and operate the program. Our community wants to enhance the environmental stewardship of businesses, but with less expenditure and without “growing government.”

Another challenge was deciding, what is “green?” How “green” does a business need to be to be “certified” as such? How comprehensive should a program be in order to ensure an appropriate level of environmental stewardship? Lastly, what would the most effective mechanism be for promoting the program and increasing participation?

Sarasota County overcame each of these challenges through a deliberate development process that engaged stakeholders from the public, businesses and government. We also thoroughly researched similar programs and tested our ideas on pilot subjects before broadly implementing the program. The result is an incentive program that supports positive rapport between business and government through a common goal of enhancing the community’s environmental performance.

The Partnership

In October 2006, Sarasota County completed development of the GBP and formally opened the program to all county businesses. As of March 12, 2008, 40 businesses have been certified. The largest has more than 3,000 employees, and the smallest three are home-based.

To become a certified Green Business Partner, a business must:

- Meet the standards of and submit the GBP Application and Checklist;
- Complete and submit a thorough Waste Assessment; and
- Pass an on-site assessment.



Green Business Benefits

There are direct and indirect benefits to a Green Business partners. Businesses realize monetary savings from conserving energy and water and efficiently managing their solid waste. The businesses have full access to assistance from the county environmental staff to help identify environmental impacts and to offer guidance to minimize or alleviate those impacts. A large resort complex identified and addressed oil storage issues and realized several recycling opportunities. Another 44-employee business realized annual savings of more than \$2,500 through implementation of GBP energy conservation and solid waste management measures.

Partners also receive market advantages through these marketing and advertising venues:

- News releases that announce certification of all new Partners. (A release often spurs additional news coverage highlighting the businesses' environmental achievements.)
- A GBP certificate and logo door stickers that can be displayed throughout business locations.
- Addition of each Green Business Partner to an on-line directory, located at the Green Business Partnership Web site, www.scgov.net/greenbusiness.
- Permission to use the GBP logo on their own printed material and Web sites.
- Televised public service announcements that showcase the partners.

The GBP Application

The GBP Application represents a year-long cooperative effort between dozens of public, business and government representatives. They developed a comprehensive list of environmental measures that balance a well-rounded "green" standard that is relevant to business with minimal county government staffing.



The resulting GBP application is a compilation of many of the most recognized best environmental practices and has been enthusiastically embraced by the business community. One business owner commented that the application saved significant effort in developing their own list. Others commented that a comprehensive, logically organized checklist of measures has made implementing their environmental program much easier and less time consuming.

The GBP Assessment

What makes the GBP program unique is that it requires businesses to actually *implement* environmental measures. Some applicants have required a year to complete the process, but by the time they schedule their assessments, they are committed to environmental stewardship principles and are proud of their accomplishments.

After the application process is complete, the assessment typically takes two to four hours, to:

- Verify implementation of the measures indicated on the application;
- Discuss and encourage further measures;
- Developing a rapport between the business and the county representative(s).

The assessment is typically conducted by the GBP program coordinator, but may consist of a team of county subject matter experts, depending on the environmental issues particular to the applicant. If the business meets the criteria, it is awarded the GBP certificate.

Summary

The Green Business Partnership is the only program of its kind in Florida and one of only a few in the United States. It is a successful and innovative example of businesses working *with* local government to improve the community's environmental performance.

Businesses in our community have met the challenge of environmental stewardship without regulatory mandates and their associated costs. The GBP program has evolved in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation. The certified businesses recognize the incentives earned through the program, and several have successfully incorporated the GBP into their own marketing efforts.

The "green" standard that Sarasota County has developed sets a high standard without burden to the businesses. The cost of development was kept within the \$150,000 initial grant and the county's \$69,000 in-kind contribution made up almost entirely of staff time. Currently, the cost to Sarasota County is approximately 0.25 of one full-time employee to keep the program moving forward.

The GBP program lends itself to easy adoption by other communities, and Sarasota County has received requests for information about the program from municipalities and counties within Florida, as well as from communities elsewhere in the country.

